

Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications, Item 4*“Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law”*

62nd session of the UN COPUOS LSC (Vienna, 23 March 2023)

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my privilege to make this statement on behalf of the Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications (Intersputnik), and present information on its activities relating to space law.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Intersputnik is an intergovernmental organization bringing together twenty-six Member States from around the globe, including Africa, America, Asia and Europe. It was established in 1971 to contribute to international cooperation in the field of space communications, and develop an international satellite telecommunications system.

To operate its system in accordance with international space law, Intersputnik accepted the rights and obligations under the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention, and committed itself to complying with the Outer Space Treaty. Intersputnik also follows “soft law” instruments developed under the auspices of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), such as the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

As a permanent observer of COPUOS, Intersputnik participates in both the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees, focusing on agenda items related to the use of outer space for satellite telecommunications and the sustainability of space activities, and informs its Member States on session outcomes. This is especially relevant for Intersputnik Members who are not members of COPUOS. Intersputnik also regularly provides its Member States with summaries of major industry developments as well as policy briefs on regulatory aspects of space activities, and their terrestrial applications.

With expertise gained both as an intergovernmental organization and satellite operator, Intersputnik promotes international cooperation in space law by engaging with the global community at various fora. Let me discuss a few events we contributed to in 2022.

Intersputnik participated in the second session of the Open-Ended Working Group

on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours. In our presentation, we shared our view on the current and future threats to space systems, outlined the cyber threats faced by satellite operators, and discussed how the safety and security of modern satellite systems could be enhanced.

At the Outer Space Security Conference organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Intersputnik joined deliberations on the intersection between outer space and other domains to share its experience in implementing non-legally binding space law instruments. Such instruments are widely supported by legacy satellite operators but need to be further promoted among the newcomers.

As a member of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), Intersputnik participated in the 73rd International Astronautical Congress (IAC) and delivered presentations at the Colloquium on the Law of Outer Space. Our interactive presentation commemorating the 55th anniversary of the Rescue Agreement, and describing its drafting history and contribution to strengthening international cooperation, was recognized as the best in the category “Space and Society” for its research quality and originality.

Capacity-building in both space law and the use of orbit and frequency resources is another area of Intersputnik’s activity. Intersputnik holds its annual NATSATTEL conference as a platform for Member States to exchange expertise in national satellite systems and new space-related technologies. At the request of Member States, Intersputnik arranges bespoke workshops, offers internships for young professionals, and provides universities and students with academic support through courses in space and telecommunications law, thesis supervision, and seminars on various aspects of space activities.

To conclude, let me inform the delegates that, in accordance with the development strategy for 2022-2026, Member States have tasked Intersputnik with expanding its global presence. This includes attracting new states to the organization, and opening regional offices to enhance cooperation in satellite communications among all Members. Consultations with interested parties are already underway and we will be pleased to update COPUOS as soon as the relevant procedures are completed.

Intersputnik would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its openness to cooperation with all countries and the space community at large in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you for your kind attention and wish the Subcommittee every success in its deliberations during the current session.